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Minister's message for National Aboriginal Day (00/06/21)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) -- Following is a message from Brad Green, the minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, on the occasion of National Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2000.

"National Aboriginal Day is a chance for all Canadians to celebrate and honour the Aboriginal peoples of our country. Their distinct heritages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs have survived for thousands of years and have become an integral part of Canada's cultural mosaic.

"It is fitting on this day of celebration to note that New Brunswick is part of the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' ancestral homeland. In fact, some of the earliest contact between Europeans and the Aboriginal peoples of Canada took place on the shores of the Bay of Chaleur. New Brunswick has changed tremendously since those early days, and recognition of Aboriginal peoples' important contributions in building our country continues to increase.

"Over the past 20 years, provincial involvement with Aboriginal people has increased to the point that virtually all provincial government departments are involved in some manner. A number of arrangements have been put into place over that time: education tuition agreements, child and family service agreements, forestry agreements, and the Joint Economic Development Initiative. Yet many important issues remain outstanding and we must strive to find mutually acceptable ways of living and working together in peace and harmony.

"There could be no better opportunity than National Aboriginal Day to encourage all New Brunswickers to further their understanding and learn more about Mi'kmaq and Maliseet culture and the Aboriginal peoples who have helped to shape our country and our province, and who will continue to help shape our future."

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